NO-TILL ORGANIC MARKET GARDEN

Producer Case Study

Building Systems That Last

The Story of David Beeter and Super Chicken Farm

Caddo Parish, Louisiana



USDA United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

NO-TILL OMG!
Organically Managed Gardening

CAMPTI Field of DREAMS

A Farm Designed for the Future

For David Beeter, farming has always been about systems.



Long before he began growing vegetables at Super Chicken Farm, David was interested in understanding how natural systems function and how thoughtful design can improve efficiency, resilience, and long-term sustainability. Whether working with soil, water, energy, or infrastructure, he believed that the best solutions are often those that work with nature rather than against it. That philosophy led him to join the No-Till Organic Market Garden project.

Like many participants, David was interested in learning practical strategies for improving soil health and producing food using regenerative methods. The project provided access to technical assistance, soil testing, educational workshops, and a network of producers committed to building healthier farms and stronger local food systems.

Located in the city of Shreveport, Super Chicken Farm became a place where David could test ideas, experiment with new production systems, and explore how regenerative agriculture could improve both environmental and economic outcomes.

From the beginning, he approached farming as a process of observation and continual improvement. Rather than focusing only on short-term production, David invested in practices designed to create lasting benefits. Healthy soil, beneficial insect habitat, renewable energy systems, and efficient infrastructure all became part of a larger vision centered on stewardship and resource conservation.

The project provided an opportunity to put those ideas into practice while learning alongside other farmers facing similar challenges and opportunities.

"The best investments are the ones that continue creating value long after you've made them."

Learning Through Innovation

David's quarter-acre market garden served as a living laboratory for experimentation and learning.

Building on lessons learned during the first growing season, he expanded production and tested a variety of crops, including tomatoes, tomatillos, peppers, winter squash, and roselle hibiscus.

Several of these crops were selected with future market opportunities in mind. David began conversations with local restaurants interested in purchasing locally grown produce and used the season to evaluate which crops performed best under his growing conditions.
Not every experiment was successful.

After investing heavily in tomato production, bacterial wilt significantly reduced yields and provided an important lesson about crop selection, disease management, and the risks associated with relying too heavily on a single crop.

Rather than viewing these setbacks as failures, David treated them as learning opportunities.

The project reinforced the value of observation, adaptation, and continuous improvement. Every challenge provided information that could be used to make better management decisions in future seasons



David’s son playing in the nursery.

Key Findings

- Implemented no-till production on a quarter-acre market garden
- Tested specialty crops for potential restaurant sales
- Increased crop diversity to improve farm resilience
- Developed pollinator habitat and beneficial insect plantings
- Learned valuable lessons about disease pressure and crop selection
- Used experimentation and observation to guide future management decisions

Building Healthy Soil

One of David's most important lessons came from a section of the garden where crops consistently struggled. The northern portion of the plot remained wet, compacted, and biologically inactive. Crops performed poorly, and the soil lacked the characteristics associated with healthy growing conditions.

Rather than forcing production in an area that was not ready, David made a different decision. He devoted nearly one-third of the growing area to soil improvement.

A dense stand of sorghum was planted as a cover crop and allowed to grow throughout the season. By late summer, the plants reached nearly eight feet tall before being terminated and returned to the soil.

This approach reflected one of the core principles of regenerative agriculture: Sometimes the best way to grow better crops is to focus first on growing better soil.

David also established flowering plants, perennial hedgerows, and habitat areas designed to attract pollinators and beneficial insects.

These plantings served multiple purposes. They increased biodiversity, improved ecological function, and helped create a healthier environment for crop production.

Over time, David observed improvements in soil quality, biological activity, and overall system resilience. More importantly, he gained a deeper appreciation for the role healthy ecosystems play in supporting productive agriculture. The project reinforced a simple but powerful lesson: Healthy farms begin with healthy soil.



NRCS Soil Scientist Matthew Denton discussing soil health with David Beeter and his son. Waylon Breaux also listens keenly.



David invested in long-term infrastructure improvements, including renewable energy systems and an energy-efficient home designed to conserve resources while supporting continued agricultural production.

"Stewardship isn't just about taking care of land. It's about creating opportunities for the people who come after you." — David Beeter

Growing a Farm and a Community

While soil health was a central focus of the project, some of its most important outcomes occurred beyond the garden itself. David's commitment to stewardship extended far beyond crop production.

On the farm, he invested in infrastructure designed to conserve resources and reduce long-term operating costs. A solar energy system initially installed to power the farm's well and utility buildings was intentionally oversized to support future expansion and eventually provide electricity for an energy-efficient home constructed on the property. The home incorporated sustainable building principles and was designed to reduce energy consumption while demonstrating practical approaches to resource conservation.

These investments reflected David's broader philosophy that environmental stewardship and economic sustainability should work together. That same philosophy guided one of the most significant decisions of his farming journey. When employment opportunities required David's family to relocate to Houston, he faced a difficult challenge. Years of work had been invested in developing the farm, improving soil health, and building infrastructure.
Rather than allowing the property to sit idle, David chose a different path.

Through relationships formed during the project, he leased a portion of the farm to fellow participant Anthony Hoff. The arrangement allowed the land to remain in production while providing Anthony and his growing family with an opportunity to continue farming. The partnership became a powerful example of how strong agricultural communities create solutions during times of transition.

The farm remained productive. The soil-building work continued. And the investments made over several years continued benefiting both families.

Looking Forward

Although David's day-to-day involvement with Super Chicken Farm has changed, the lessons learned from the No-Till Organic Market Garden project endure.

The cover crops remain part of the soil.
The pollinator habitat continues to support beneficial insects. The renewable energy infrastructure continues producing value. And the relationships built through the project continue supporting farmers and local food systems throughout Louisiana.

David's experience demonstrates that conservation is not simply about individual practices. It is about designing systems that can adapt, evolve, and continue providing benefits over time.



David Beeter, Anthony Hoff and his family check on recently made biochar.

Key Lessons Learned

- Healthy soil requires long-term investment and patience.
- Diversity increases resilience in both farms and ecosystems.
- Observation and adaptation are essential management tools.
- Renewable energy and conservation practices can work together.
- Strong relationships are among a farm's most valuable assets.

Key Themes from David's Journey

- Soil Health
- Resource Conservation
- Renewable Energy
- Regenerative Agriculture
- Ecological Design
- Climate Resilience
- Adaptive Stewardship
- Farmer-to-Farmer Learning
- Community Building
- Long-Term Stewardship

Closing Reflection

David Beeter's journey illustrates that some of the most important conservation investments are designed to create benefits that extend far beyond a single growing season. Through soil health practices, renewable energy systems, ecological design, and a commitment to helping other farmers succeed, he demonstrated that stewardship is ultimately about building systems that continue to support people, land, and communities for generations to come.